

Appln No. 09/715,944

Amdt date March 17, 2005

Reply to Office action of December 17, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-15, 17-18, and 20-21 will be pending in this application upon entry of the above amendments. Claims 1, 3, 6, 15, 17, and 21 have been amended. Claims 16, 19, and 22 have been canceled. The amendments find full support in the original specification, claims, and drawings. No new matter has been added. In view of the above amendments and remarks that follow, Applicant respectfully requests an early indication of allowance of the now pending claims 1-15, 17-18, and 20-21.

Claims 1-18 and 20-22 are rejected as either anticipated by Kitsukawa et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,282,713), or obvious based on a combination of Kitsukawa et. al and one or more of Kaiser et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,615,408), Blacketter et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,415,438), and Moriyama et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,889,746).

Claim 19, however, is objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, independent claims 1, 15, and 21 have been amended to include the limitation that "a first thread is capable of adjusting a behavior of mask data and a second thread is capable of adjusting a behavior of object data" as recited in claim 19. As acknowledged by the Examiner, none of the cited references teach or suggest this limitation. Accordingly, claims 1, 15, and 21, and the claims that depend directly or indirectly therefrom, are in condition for allowance.

Claim 17 was amended for clarity purposes. The amendments are unrelated to patentability.

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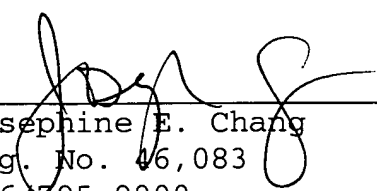
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In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests an early indication of allowance of claims 1-15, 17-18, and 20-21.

Respectfully submitted,

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